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Election of the officers of the Main Committees

Letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Arab Group and in my capacity as Chair of the Group for the month of June 2016, I wish to refer to the upcoming elections of the President of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly and the Chairs and members of the Bureau of the Main Committees of the Assembly, which are scheduled to be held on 13 June.

In this connection, I am compelled to convey the firm rejection by the States members of the Arab Group of the candidacy of Israel, on behalf of the Western European and other States, for the post of Chair of the Sixth Committee (Legal Committee).

The Arab Group deems as totally unacceptable, offensive and provocative the candidacy of Israel, an occupying Power for the past 49 years, for this sensitive post. The leadership of this Committee, which is tasked with addressing legal and other critical issues, including, inter alia, the rule of law at the national and international levels, measures to eliminate international terrorism, the responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts, the status of the Additional Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts and the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction, requires, at a minimum respect for the Charter of the United Nations, the rule of law, including international humanitarian and human rights law and United Nations resolutions, and credible support for the effective functioning of the United Nations, not the active obstruction of the implementation of its resolutions and decisions.

Israel, which is a grave violator of international law and in glaring breach of the purposes and principles of the Charter and which has continuously denigrated the United Nations and undermined the Organization's credibility with its blatant contempt for and non-compliance with United Nations resolutions, is therefore deemed an unfit and unqualified candidate for this post.

We seriously question the credibility and eligibility for Bureau membership of a Member State that stands in flagrant and deliberate violation of all United Nations resolutions relevant to it, including countless resolutions adopted by the General Assembly regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of Palestine as

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a whole. Indeed, the selection of such a candidate makes a mockery of the United Nations system. Furthermore, the repeated, negative and provocative statements by Israeli representatives in past deliberations of the Sixth Committee itself are clear reflections of the contempt that Israel has for this Committee in particular and the work and role of the Assembly as a whole, casting grave doubt on the validity of bestowing the privilege of such a chairmanship on Israel.

While regional groups are tasked with selecting their candidates for the respective Bureau posts in each of the Main Committees, we must take this opportunity to stress that this comes with responsibility. Because the Western European and other States, in spite of the serious concerns conveyed in this regard, have insisted on maintaining the candidacy of Israel for the post of Chair of the Sixth Committee, we are compelled to formally register our objection to this candidacy.

On behalf of the Arab Group, I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5.

(*Signed*) Khaled Hussein Mohamed **Alyemany**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chair of the Arab Group